

GERMANY, CENTER OF THE "PEACE OFFENSIVE"

Is an East-West Settlement Possible?

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

NOTHING illustrates better the prevailing temper of Europe this spring than the fact that conservatism has once more become the dominant mood of electorates and governments. In Britain, the coronation serves to underline a yearning for stability which is the emotional counterpart of the Conservative government's astonishing rise in popularity since it took office eighteen months ago. In France, Gaullism has suffered eclipse in the municipal elections and its former adherents have largely rallied to that symbol of pre-war bourgeois respectability, M. Pinay. In this atmosphere it somehow seems fitting that President Eisenhower should turn out to be a good deal less forceful as a national leader than had been hoped—or feared. After all, with Stalin gone, there appears little occasion for him to display those unduly aggressive qualities which Europeans had been warning themselves would be forthcoming from the White House once he was installed there.

None of this represents a genuine stabili-

WITH the Russian "peace offensive" in full swing, sowing the usual mixed crop of hope, skepticism, and confusion, GEORGE LICHTHEIM here surveys the international scene with a view to the possibilities of an East-West settlement of at least some of the chief issues of the cold war. Mr. Lichtheim outlines the factors that make a genuine settlement very difficult for both parties: he indicates why a totalitarian regime such as the Soviet Union cannot easily retreat without endangering the stability of the entire imperialist structure it has erected; and why, in his opinion, the West cannot afford an arrangement that might "disarm Europe morally without disarming Russia materially." Mr. Lichtheim, who hangs his hat in London, is a regular writer for COMMENTARY; in April he contributed "The Cold War Perspective Without Stalin."

zation comparable even to the false dawn of the Locarno period after the First World War. NATO remains as essential as before to the physical security of Western Europe, and Europe's economics remain as shaky as ever. With a slight American recession on the horizon, the dollar gap has once more begun to seem an immediate problem rather than a permanent affliction. The downward trend of sterling area raw-material prices since the opening of the "peace offensive" promises another repetition of the bi-annual British dollar deficit which some economists are now beginning to regard as an inherent feature of Britain's postwar struggle for survival. In France, the Indo-Chinese hemorrhage and a budget deficit totaling one-fifth of the 1953 record appropriations already voted by parliament, combine to raise all the old issues in an aggravated form: no hope of genuine financial stability without a constitutional reform which the voters in the municipal elections have just by implication rejected. As for Italy, no amount of political tightrope walking can conceal the fact that none of the country's basic problems has been tackled under a regime fully occupied by the urgent problem of keeping alive and saving the fragile parliamentary institutions.

THE change in atmosphere, therefore, is merely psychological. It is nonetheless real and important, both as a contributory factor in promoting the Soviet "peace offensive" and as an echo of its recent manifestations. Europe wants the cold war to end, or at least to become innocuous, and will bitterly resent any attempt to aggravate it, whether the initiative comes from Moscow or Washington. There is already, in responsible quarters, a groundswell of dislike for Mr. Dulles which goes some way to offset

the ingrained detestation of M. Molotov. A multitude of small straws in the wind—the reaction to American stiffness at Panmunjom or Tokyo, the jubilation of the popular press over the smallest courtesies shown by the Russians, the sudden resurgence of anti-Germanism in various quarters—indicate a revival of the mood dominant in the immediate postwar period. Aberrational American imbecilities such as the McCarthy "investigation" of information libraries, or the insolent treatment of visiting European celebrities under the provisions of the Immigration Act, are given a degree of prominence, and arouse a volume of anger and ridicule, suggestive of a growing belief that peace has come at last and normal everyday sentiments can once more be voiced without inhibition.

This feeling is no longer confined to the left. There is no more staunchly Conservative paper than the *Financial Times*, London's counterpart of the *Wall Street Journal*. Yet the full-blooded John Bullish abuse poured by its columnist on Republican high tariff moguls, Washington bureaucrats who obstruct British exports to America, and Senators McCarran and McCarthy, make the *New Statesman's* carping sound like polite drawing-room twaddle. The Tories who banked on Eisenhower feel betrayed by the administration's weakness vis-à-vis Congress, and take it out on the Republicans, but with an undertone of resentment against the United States in general. In the most exalted quarters, a growing apprehension that the administration is not in earnest about tariff reductions has lent wings to the campaign to make Britain less dependent on dollar earnings (and therefore more dependent on expensive home-grown food in place of American and Canadian imports). And all over the Continent the argument is once more heard that trade relations with Russia and her satellites *must* be expanded if Western Europe is to earn a living. In short, European conservatism, for the first time since the war, is acting on the assumption—hitherto confined to the left—that a greater degree of independence from the United States is both possible and desirable.

THE Soviet "peace offensive" takes its cue from this state of affairs and—also for the first time since the war—shows some tactical ability in exploiting it. Nothing perhaps serves better to debunk the myth of Stalin's political genius than the improvement in the techniques of Soviet diplomacy since his demise. One has only to compare the now famous *Pravda* editorial of April 25, answering President Eisenhower's speech, with the semi-lunatic screams which used to issue from that quarter not so long ago. No wonder the British press was full of guarded praise: "Every sentence in the enormously long *Pravda* leading article . . . deserves the closest study. The article as a whole presents the calmest, clearest, and most rational statement of Soviet policy that has appeared for many a long month" (*Times*, April 27). "There is much in all this that is by any standards reasonable and by Kremlin standards strikingly so" (*Economist*, May 2). This mood is echoed daily across the Channel, with individual variations running from nervous optimism in Paris to studied reticence in Bonn, but with a common note of hopefulness which has not been heard since the cold war began. Churchill's eagerness to visit Moscow and, it would seem, drink the Politbureau under the table and extract a peace treaty on the spot, only puts into characteristically colorful terms an attitude common in Western Europe at the moment. It is an attitude compounded of despair at the prospect of an endlessly prolonged war of nerves, impatience with "liberation" talk in Washington, and genuine belief that the Kremlin may be ready for a settlement. And it naturally centers on the unspoken assumption that a tolerable settlement in Central Europe will leave America and Russia face to face in the Far East: which is more or less what every European is praying for.

The British and West European demand for the formal recognition of Soviet China and its inclusion in the United Nations must be viewed against this background. It stems not from any illusions about the character of the Peking regime, but from a realistic assessment of the new world balance of power

brought about by the Communist victory in China. That balance opposes the Continental bloc of Russia and China to the United States and its allies: Japan, Britain, and Western Europe. Europeans argue that if Washington wants to upset this alignment it should do so in Asia: by trying to separate China from Russia. But the first step to this goal must be formal recognition of Peking, i.e., an official admission that the Chinese revolution cannot be undone. For unless this step is taken, they believe, it is hopeless to expect Peking to become more independent of Moscow. The gradual encouragement of Chinese nationalism—dangerous though it is to China's immediate neighbors—is the only means of insuring that Peking shall have a foreign policy of its own. For this reason even friendly critics of President Eisenhower's statement of April 16 felt that he laid himself open to a damaging Russian counterstroke when he failed to include the recognition of the Chinese government among the steps America is willing to take.

Consequently, Peking's complicity in the Vietminh drive against Anglo-French interests in Southeast Asia has not caused any display of moral indignation in London and Paris. It is taken for granted that China will flout the Western Powers until they combine greater effectiveness in defending their interests with greater readiness to take the Chinese revolution as an accomplished fact, and treat China as one of the Big Five (or Big Six, if someone in Washington should have the imagination to propose the inclusion of India, or at least not to oppose it). Would this lead to "peace" in the Far East? Probably not: the best-informed people here believe that the Kremlin basically wants a standstill agreement in Europe so as to be able to concentrate on Asia. But at least it would enable the Western Powers to confront their antagonist without the handicap of having to defend what they consider an obsolete moral position, and without being obliged to wage a "crusade" against what is, to their mind, one form of Asian nationalism. What political and military conflicts may have to be fought out thereafter would

at least be dehydrated of all ideological passion. The Kremlin scored a point in its reply to Eisenhower when it took up the cudgels on behalf of China, "the greatest country in the world." Reduce this issue to one of power politics, and half the propaganda battle is already won, for China is now and will remain a threat to its weaker neighbors. But before we can make use of this natural conflict of interests between China and her neighbors, there will have to be an end to the absurd pretense that Peking can be boycotted permanently. The long-term business of disrupting the Moscow-Peking axis may well occupy decades, but it might as well begin now.

II

IN THE Asian theater the Kremlin can turn the pressure on and off without direct involvement. In Europe, by contrast, its actions impinge directly upon the exposed Soviet glacis from Stettin to the Black Sea. By relaxing the cold war tensions Moscow may hope to give centrifugal pressures in the West full play, until the Atlantic community relapses into the state of semi-anarchy from which it was rescued by NATO. But any genuine relaxation must entail at least a partial sacrifice of the outlying Soviet bastions in Central Europe. Ideally the Kremlin may aim, and probably does aim, at no more than a standstill agreement, but it is unlikely that the Western Powers will be satisfied with anything short of a settlement which removes the Soviet occupation troops from Eastern Germany and Austria and enables the two severed halves of Germany to come together again: failing such an arrangement, the arms race will continue. If one assumes that a desire to reduce expenditure on armaments is the basic motivation behind the Kremlin's new attitude, it therefore seems reasonable to conclude that there is at least a chance of this kind of agreement, provided Washington foregoes the demand for wholesale "liberation" of the satellites, and provided both sides are willing to face the political risks of unifying Germany.

But the great problem is that it is not easy

to evaluate those risks. What, for instance, is the significance of recent measures to convert East Germany's so-called police force into an army? The process has been going on for some years, and it seems to have gathered speed in recent months. Is this mere blackmail or does it portend a long-range plan to enter the unification talks only for the purpose of disrupting them at some stage and proclaiming East Germany a "sovereign independent People's Democracy"? The same uncertainty surrounds the Sovietization of industry and agriculture which started in real earnest two years ago and has been speeded up since last summer. Perhaps the simplest explanation is also the truest: namely that Moscow is following its traditional practice of keeping two different solutions available, depending on how the peace talks develop. Beyond this surmise only the foggiest guesswork is possible.

Not that there is much uncertainty about the facts. It is no secret, for instance, that East Germany now boasts the nucleus of a genuine army, though as yet one without a general staff. According to official British computations, disclosed by the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the House of Commons on April 23, there are at least 90,000 men in the ground forces, 6,000 in the air force, and 4,000 in the small naval force organized for coastal duties. This may seem a modest establishment, but there is evidence to show that expansion has been proceeding apace in recent months, notably in the air force, which now includes three fighter regiments equipped with Russian training aircraft. The ground forces are known to include one armored corps (two infantry and one armored division) and eighteen independent regiments, the whole equipped with 600 Russian tanks, 250 self-propelled guns, 1,700 other guns, and 4,000 vehicles. A skeleton force? Certainly, but one that can be rapidly expanded as soon as Army Group North (at Pasewalk, under Major-General Rentzsch), Army Group Center (at Erfurt or Dessau), and Army Group South (at or near Dresden), have their full complement of officers.

It is likewise no secret that the Soviet authorities have instructed the East German administration to build a strategic railway 200 miles long from the port of Rostock to the important railway junction of Halle: a railway whose sole purpose is to link the three Army Groups. Nor is there any mystery about the fact that the fourteen administrative districts, which have taken the place of the old East German *Laender*, have opened recruiting offices; that some 400,000 people are receiving elementary military training; that factory workers are encouraged to enroll as prospective "partisan fighters" against unnamed enemies; and that women and girls are urged to learn how to shoot.

ALL this *may* be an overture to peace talks leading to the unification, disarming, and neutralization of Germany; but it may also be the first step towards either a "Korean" solution of the German problem, or at least a "Czechoslovak" one. A unified Germany, that is to say, might find itself harboring the world's biggest fifth column, ready to take over as soon as all occupation troops—Western as well as Russian—have been withdrawn. This danger is discounted by Social-Democratic optimists, who feel convinced that the East German regime would be swept away without a trace if free elections were permitted in the Soviet zone; but it is taken seriously by most foreigners and some Germans. And even the Social Democrats admit that the young generation in the zone is being Stalinized through the official youth movement, and that given a few more years of this totalitarian pressure a substantial section of it will turn away from the West for good. There will then really be two German states, and two German nations.

On a long-range calculation, therefore, the Russians may well feel reasonably confident of their ability to turn Eastern Germany into a full-fledged Soviet satellite. Alternatively, they may permit its reabsorption in a united (and disarmed) Germany outside the European community, which would then harbor a Trojan Horse of menacing proportions. For one thing, they

could look forward to the possibility of a subsequent Communist *coup* on the Prague model. They would also gain the paralyzing effect upon Western Europe of a newly resurgent "independent" Germany. The European Army project would of course be killed stone dead, France would retire into her shell, and parochial nationalism would revive all over Europe.

Serious politics in France and Germany today are concerned with the problem of harnessing the old forces of national energy to something larger than the nation: not only because the European nation-state is incapable of defending itself under modern conditions, but because genuine self-confidence cannot be generated under the economic and political conditions which the national framework imposes. This is true of Germany as well as of France, despite the Federal Republic's brittle economic prosperity. It accounts for the fact that European integration has become the only slogan which the young generation in Western Europe is prepared to treat seriously. All this would come to an end, or at least be seriously checked, if Germany were unified and neutralized, that is, expressly forbidden to enter the Atlantic Community.

III

THUS obstacles to the unification of Germany are much bigger than the Western public as yet suspects. Eight years of post-war history have brought about a division in the heart of Europe which will face the powers with unprecedented problems if they ever get down to the job. While the Federal Republic is virtually part and parcel of the Atlantic world, Eastern Germany has during these years—and particularly during the past two years—been turned into a "People's Democracy." Roughly 90 per cent of its industrial production is no longer in private hands. Some 85 per cent of the land has been split into farms of less than 50 acres, and these fragmented holdings in turn have since last summer been drawn into the maelstrom of collectivization. A year ago, the chairman of a group of German econo-

mists in Stuttgart who study East German problems, Dr. Paul Binder, remarked that collectivization would have to be swept away if Germany were to be reunited, but he also warned that "there has never been an agrarian revolution in history which has been successfully reversed." Since then, collectivization has been greatly speeded up, commerce has been further concentrated in the state *Handelszentrale*, Stakhanovite methods have been extended in industry, the managerial elite has obtained additional privileges at the expense of the mass of labor, and foreign trade with the West has all but disappeared.

Eastern Germany was once a component part of the German economy; it is so no longer. The Russian aim has been to turn it into the workshop of the Eastern bloc, and this aim has largely succeeded. Not only has production of pig iron, steel, cement, chemicals, and electric power increased above pre-war, at the expense of textiles and other consumer goods: the fact that the zone has become a great industrial producer has meant a reorientation of its trade. Before the war, the area traded four times as much with the rest of Germany as it did with foreign countries and its internal German trade was roughly balanced at four billion marks. Exports were about one billion. Today some two billion marks' worth of goods, or over 80 per cent of its "official" exports, go to countries of the Eastern bloc, while an estimated three billion marks' worth a year have been taken by the Russians as reparations. By contrast, East Germany's interzonal and "Western" trade is negligible.

It would be a heavy burden for the Federal Republic to take over Eastern Germany's foreign trade, unbacked as it is by gold or dollar reserves, or by any sort of credit or good will in the West. In addition, the Federal government would have to assume a staggering financial burden, for East German banks have neither reserves nor credit: they are mere issuing houses for worthless paper money whose only value is its negotiability within an autarchic Soviet bloc. The government would also have to find

work for the 250,000 men now employed, at fantastic cost, in the uranium mines, which would have to be closed as they are utterly uneconomic; for another quarter million in industries set up for the exclusive benefit of the Eastern bloc; for the 100,000 members of the "Peoples Police" and the 50,000 employees of the state *Handelsorganisationen*; and for some hundreds of thousands of wage earners who would presumably return from exile in Western Germany. No wonder West German public opinion, for all its pious protestations, is in fact far from anxious to speed the day of unification.

WHAT makes the problem urgent is the agricultural breakdown which by the beginning of May threatened Eastern Germany with actual starvation—this in a former surplus area! Collectivization, the flight of independent farmers from the land, lack of machinery and sheer bad luck have produced a state of affairs where this spring the zone is short of 600,000 tons of bread grain, 125,000 tons of potatoes, and 100,000 tons of sugar, until the next harvest becomes available. The famine in potatoes—once the staple food of the people—has in recent months reached such proportions that restaurants serve boiled potatoes only to customers bringing an equivalent supply of raw potatoes. The stream of refugees now consists for the most part of people actually threatened by starvation: chiefly from among the two million businessmen, shopkeepers, and artisans whose ration cards were withdrawn at the beginning of May.

This collapse in farming and food distribution contrasts oddly with the parallel growth of heavy industry. Temporary famines are not regarded as a serious matter by the Russians, and to the extent that they break the resistance of the people to official policy they even have their part to play in the over-all plan. It is true that Eastern Germany is not yet completely shut off from the remainder of the world, a fact dramatically underlined by the Federal German government's appeal on May 4 to international relief organizations to send food

into the zone. On a somewhat longer perspective there are now semi-official plans in Bonn for supplying the zone, *after* unification, with consumer goods, and for West German firms to "adopt" their East German counterparts in order to help finance production and marketing. But these schemes hinge on the willingness of the Russians and their German agents to permit elections and unification to take place at a moment when economic collapse threatens. *Prima facie*, this seems unlikely, though it is just conceivable that a real and permanent breakdown might induce the Kremlin to wash its hands of the whole region.

Even on the most optimistic assumption about Soviet intentions, there are serious economists who doubt whether a unified Germany can ever be made economically viable again, unless it is also allowed to join the Atlantic world: and this would run counter to the neutralization the Kremlin is expected to demand as the price of political unification. Thus it seems possible that if the Soviet government in the end agrees to unification, it will be mainly from a belief that a neutralized Germany must shortly become ripe for Communist penetration. The longer unification is delayed, the more certainly will Eastern Germany become a Soviet Republic. Doubtless the Pieck-Ulbricht regime would be swept away if genuine elections were held, but in the long run Germany might find herself sucked into the Soviet orbit, at least to an extent sufficient to eliminate all talk of making German divisions available for NATO. If this is the long-range Soviet aim, nothing has yet occurred to render it impossible.

IV

CHINA and Germany have been singled out in this discussion because they are in fact the two key areas in the world struggle. Whether the cold war comes to an end will depend on whether agreement can be reached on these two issues. By comparison, all others are unimportant, almost meaningless. It is not, for example, seriously expected in London that a Four Power conference,

if one were held, would be asked to concern itself with such questions as the holding of elections in the remainder of Eastern Europe; or with Soviet propaganda in Asia. Whatever the settlement, these problems remain. It is appreciated that Washington cannot simply drop these issues, with Congress in its present mood; but it is not thought that President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles will expect the British and French governments to take the same view of the international situation as that held by Republican members of the Senate.

There is, on the contrary, a distinct possibility that if the Kremlin is reasonably conciliatory, European sentiment will rally behind a demand for a settlement which would admit China (and some fourteen other candidates) into the United Nations, neutralize a unified Germany, and bury the European Army scheme. Europe is so willing to accept such a settlement that Whitehall was genuinely surprised when the *Pravda* editorial of April 25 failed to demand the immediate convocation of a Four Power meeting on Germany. Such a demand would have embarrassed Washington. That it was not at once put forward indicated a certain clumsiness, which in turn suggested that M. Molotov was still in effective control of foreign affairs. But matters may change in this respect, too; with Stalin out of the way, there is no saying how far the Kremlin may go in recovering some of the ground it lost in the immediate postwar period by its display of brutal arrogance. Already there is evidence that the "peace offensive" has made some impression in France, notably in quarters where the rearmament of Germany is thought intolerable. The French are probably right in believing that Germany would quickly dominate any West European organization which did not include Britain; but since they also refuse to let Bonn become a member of NATO, they seem to have effectively barred the way to an "Atlantic" solution of the German problem. What then remains if not the "neutralization" which Moscow is now dangling in front of Europe, and which is clearly in-

tended to make European integration impossible? One may argue that a neutralized, but independent, Germany could subsequently be drawn into an "Atlantic" framework: but only after a lengthy intervening period of internal upheaval and the scrapping of all the present arrangements for making the Federal Republic an integral part of Western Europe. No wonder the Bonn government dreads this prospect. The more clear-headed French dread it, too, but there is still a residue of neutralist sentiment in France which, combined with Communist pressure, renders the country vulnerable to the more skillful diplomacy which Moscow has been practicing since Stalin's departure.

IF ANYTHING can spoil the Kremlin's scheme it is the very extent of the Soviet conquests since 1945. So deeply have the frontiers of the Soviet empire been thrust into Central Europe that any disengagement now must perforce create an impression of wholesale retreat under pressure. There must be times when the men in the Kremlin secretly wish that the Great Teacher of Mankind had not been quite so successful as an empire-builder. For consider the effect on Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia of a Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Germany and Austria; or the yet more startling effect on the Soviet public if the satellites should display signs of independence. Besides, a resurgent Germany would not be a comfortable neighbor. If the Western powers are running risks in encouraging or appearing to encourage the unification of Germany, so are the Russians. These risks, moreover, are of a kind to which military men must be peculiarly sensitive. We do not know what part the Soviet military hierarchy has played in the recent change of attitude in Moscow, but on the assumption that a kind of duel is going on between the new men in power and the more orthodox Stalinists of the older generation, it is reasonable to think that the military will tend to support the faction which takes a pessimistic view of Russia's security needs. Where did Stalin himself stand on this issue?

Apparently he meant to have it both ways: he was determined to avoid a major clash with the United States, but willing to let the cold war go on. These aims were already becoming incompatible at the time of his death, and it seems possible that he would have taken the initiative to end the deadlock.

THE new regime is built around Malenkov, and who is Malenkov? Clémenceau once said of a colleague whom he disliked: "Imagine a piece of paper being pulled at the four corners; presently there will be a hole in the middle; that hole is Monsieur P." Is Malenkov more than the "hole" at the center of a political system pulled in different directions by the party, the state bureaucracy, the army, and the MGB-MVD (now once more included in one ministry under Beria's direction)? Can final control be exercised by a man who lacks the prestige of the revolutionary leader or the war leader: two archetypal figures among whom the remnants of Stalin's authority must ultimately be distributed? True, he has been built up (though not very insistently) as a benevolent figure, the dispenser of peace proposals, amnesties, lower prices for household goods, and stern rebukes for erring police officials. He may be relatively popular with the managerial class; it may even be true that he was not, in the recent past, actively associated with the more frightful aspects of Stalinism (though he was Stalin's right-hand man during the 1936-38 "purge"). But all that does not quite add up to the qualifications needed for the job of moderating the Stalinist system of rule by terror.

How genuine is the whole experiment in liberalization? There is some pertinence in the argument that the Malenkov government is the first grouping since the revolution to display something like a "Thermidorian" pattern, i.e., a tendency to execute a retreat from the reign of terror and to make things easier at least for the privileged stratum of Soviet society (the amnesty was largely designed to benefit minor culprits among the bureaucracy). It has broken precedent by rebuking the Secret Police for its use of

"illegal methods" (but Yagoda, then NKVD chief, was executed in 1938, after having been made to "confess" that he had plotted to assassinate Gorky). Yet there are odd bits of evidence suggesting that internal rivalries—between the party and the Secret Police, even between the MGB and MVD branches of the latter—had more to do with the discomfiture of those responsible for the anti-Jewish campaign and the "doctors' plot," than any genuine desire to introduce the rule of law. There was, to be sure, the conspicuous case of Ignatiev's disgrace and dismissal from the post of Deputy Minister of State Security; but Ignatiev had also been appointed secretary to the Central Committee of the party on March 7 (i.e., after Stalin's death) and confirmed on March 20, a bare fortnight before his downfall. This was the first time the MGB had won a key position in the Central Committee's own secretariat. It marked the high point of its power, a power promoted by Stalin's maniacal distrust of all his associates. Is it altogether farfetched to suggest that Ignatiev was got rid of because the party leaders had decided to cut the Secret Police down to size, and not because they meant to alter the unholy methods of that organization? And is it at all conceivable that Malenkov can get rid of the Secret Police's predominance without letting the army in? After the Thermidor comes Bonaparte, as every Communist learns at school. How long can this unstable equilibrium last?

V

THESE questions are not altogether idle. They suggest grounds for doubting not merely the willingness of the Kremlin rulers to break away from the Stalinist pattern, but their ability to do so as well. On present evidence, the entire experiment in pacification and liberalization is being conducted within the institutional framework of Stalinism. While this state of affairs lasts there is little ground for optimism. Conversely, any genuine reform of the political structure is certain to enhance the army's prestige. And the army is not necessarily an improvement. The

Chinese Communist revolution was carried out by political forces built around a military core; that may have contributed to greater internal stability, but it has not made Chinese Communism noticeably more peaceful than its Russian progenitor.

Can totalitarian regimes ever be reformed from within? Examples from Russian history are quoted, but the czardom was not fully totalitarian in the modern sense. Would a streamlined and modernized totalitarian government in Moscow be willing to restore that "one world," the disappearance of which Stalin described last October as the main result of the Second World War? There is no obvious answer, for we are in the presence of forces to which there is no genuine historical parallel. If any general principle can be invoked at all it is probably that which Marvell summed up in the closing lines of the poem he addressed to Cromwell:

*The same arts that did gain
A pow'r, must it maintain.*

That being so, it is questionable whether the Western World can afford to become party to a settlement which might disarm Europe morally without disarming Russia materially. Yet Europe urgently wants peace and a breathing spell. This dilemma is the background against which American and Anglo-French diplomacy are now executing an intricate series of dance steps.

The recent NATO Council meeting in Paris settled nothing. Its principal outcome was an American undertaking not to follow up Dulles's maladroit threats to make defense subsidies dependent on early ratification of the European Defense Community scheme; and an Anglo-French undertaking not to rush into a Four Power conference unless the Russians have previously given grounds for believing that they are in earnest about seeking peace. But the British government, much to Dulles's chagrin, refused to rule out the idea of Four Power talks altogether until the Kremlin has given way on some specific issue.

It remains the British contention that all questions can and must be settled around

the conference table, and that Moscow cannot be expected to submit to preliminary tests of good faith. Churchill's determination to go down in history as the great peace-maker (and to win the next election on that slogan) is fully consistent on this point with Foreign Office tradition and national psychology. And in Paris the all but unbreakable parliamentary deadlock on the EDC treaty naturally encourages the government to hope that a Four Power conference leading to the neutralization of Germany will make it possible to drop the European Army scheme.

AT THE back of all minds there is the thought that if neutralization should break down, the whole of Germany can subsequently be included in NATO. That would give the Germans the national army they are supposed to be yearning for; it would relieve the British of the constant American and French pressure to join a federated Europe (in order to balance West Germany); and it would compensate French nationalism, reluctant to contemplate the merging of the French army in a federal structure, for the resurgence of a united Germany. Lastly, of course, it would make nonsense of the Kremlin's plans for keeping Germany disarmed and Europe defenseless. On this reckoning, the first essential is to get the Russians out of Eastern Germany, and to avoid all foolish talk of liberating the Western Slavs. All the rest, it is assumed, will follow in good time.

Is this a realistic calculation? The Kremlin has never yet relinquished anything peacefully, and the abandonment of Eastern Germany would be a big gamble. But there are those who believe that Malenkov is an "Asia First" and that under his direction Soviet policy in Europe will increasingly go over to the defensive. If they are right—and if Malenkov does not betray their hopes by allowing himself to be worsted in the domestic struggle for power—it is just conceivable that this year will witness a breathing space if not the end of the cold war in Europe: for how long, no one can say.